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Faculty Senate Executive Committee Minutes, October 19, 2020

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FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 19, 2020

3:30 – 5:00 p.m.

Old Main-Champ Hall

Present:	Timothy Taylor (President), Patrick Belmont (Past-President), Boyd Edwards (President-Elect), President Noelle Cockett (Ex-Officio), Provost Frank Galey (Ex-Officio), Michele Hillard (Exec. Sec.), Benjamin George, Maureen Hearn, John Ferguson, Yoon Lee, Nicholas Roberts, Jessica Lucero, Soren Brothers, Vicki Allan, Britt Fagerheim, Denise Stewardson, , Jan Thornton, Robert Wagner
Absent:	Don Busenbark
Guests:	Paul Barr, EPC Chair Michael Lyons, AFT Chair Edward Heath, Athletics Council Chair Christine Cooper Rompato, Library Advisory Board Chair

Call to Order -Timothy Taylor

[Approval of Minutes](#) – September 21, 2020

Minutes approved as distributed.

University Business - Noelle Cockett, President | Frank Galey, Provost

Provost Galey – USU currently has a working group looking at face-to-face instruction. The CIDI group has worked with the CARES team and faculty members have a status on their students regarding COVID. There will be a graduate student town hall next Thursday. During that town hall mental health professionals will be available to talk with students. Sent a survey to grad students to see how they are doing and what areas need to be targeted. Recently accepted by APLU ASPIRE IP Change network. Focused on STEM faculty to see what we can do to include diversity and inclusivity in hiring. Also looking at inclusive pedagogy. The team overseeing these items is headed up by Claudia Radel, Michelle Baker, and Abby Benninghoff. A proposal was sent to the graduate council asking that the requirements for the GRE exam be dropped campus wide. If a department wants the GRE they can still require it. This will go through the Academic Standards subcommittee and then will go through EPC.

President Cockett – The higher education system in the state has gone through a restructuring. Instead of having two systems one for university and one for trade colleges, these have been combined under one umbrella. This weekend and today COVID has occupied less than 50% of the president's time. USU student positive rates are staying flat compared to the increased numbers across the state. Fewer and fewer students are coming on campus for classes. They are extremely comfortable using Zoom and social media platforms. Spring semester will have the same kind of restrictions, but we will see more offerings for courses through Zoom. Tim Taylor is involved with a new committee looking at how to help faculty. Going to be difficult for changes through the fall semester. The USU testing site is now open and is available for anyone in USU. The beauty of the site is that results can be sent to the individual within 6-8 hours if they test in the morning or the next morning if they test in the afternoon. You must register for an appointment and the test is free of charge. USU nursing students are helping with the collections and the testing is taking place here on campus. The other campuses have strong relationships with their local health departments and they can get individuals in for testing very quickly. Utah came out with a new way to measure areas and it is based on numbers of infection. The numbers of cases are continuing to increase so the governor has instituted a 2-week circuit breaker. This would limit the number of individuals in social gathers hoping to drive down the number of positive cases.

Blanding and Price is in the medium level of infection. Not through with this yet and it could get worse before it gets better. Stay safe and healthy. If you have been within 6 feet of an individual for 15 minutes that has tested positive you must quarantine for 14 days. Stay 6 feet apart and wear your masks. Moving forward what is teaching and courses going to look like? In spring USU may realize where we are going. Labs are very difficult to do remotely and does not seem to help the students. The challenge is giving students a hands-on opportunity for tech and lab classes. Students are definitely missing the social interaction and this is hurting the freshman class more than the others. If you have a gathering, even if you're outside, you need to have a seating chart so that we will know how many people may have been exposed. College Record came out with top 10 universities for COVID responses and USU ranked number six. Great Job USU!!!

Information

[EPC Monthly Report](#) – October 1, 2020 - Paul Barr

Academic Standards Subcommittee – did not meeting – nothing to report.

General Education – 8 designations were approved.

Approved 131 course requests. Approved five R401 requests.

Discussed T-grades and standardization of course justifications.

Move to Faculty Senate agenda.

Carbon Emissions Reductions - Charles Darnell

Updated Faculty Senate on the progress that has been made and also the challenges.

The university is ahead of schedule on converting to LED lights. DoT has expanded opportunities for carpoolers and electric vehicles. USU has approval to purchase one electric vehicle for the USU motor pool. President Cockett approved to pay the carbon fee for anyone traveling during 2020. Each year she will pay 10% less. If departments reduce their carbon footprint, they won't have to pay. Purchasing renewable energy portfolios has taken a lot of time and is proving to be very difficult. Building a coalition of large energy users and going through negotiations right now.

Move to Faculty Senate Agenda.

Reports

[Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee \(AFT\)](#) Annual Report - Michael Lyons

There is one major item in report, but most commonly the cases are promotion and tenure cases. The AFT assists in pulling together panels to discuss these cases. The major case arose from a tenure denial from April 2019 and it is suggested that the Faculty Senate look at the code so that this particular issue doesn't happen again. The claim was that an administrator had discriminated on the basis of gender. The office of equity deals with the general discrimination and the AFT deals with other issues. Legal Counsel asked that the Office of Equity handle their grievance first. It was in late February 2020 when the grievance hearing was organized. Not able to conduct the grievance hearing until May 2020 due to COVID. At this point the additional year at USU had expired. Panel has met and made a recommendation to the president. Two more faculty members came forward but did not meet the timetable so those cases were not brought forward. Code needs to be looked at especially timeframes/deadlines that are hard to meet. Provost Galey has had an initial meeting with Nikki Kendrick. Looking at redoing Code 407 and will look at working these things in parallel.

Motion to move the Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Ben George. Seconded by Britt Fagerheim. Moved to the agenda.

[Athletics Council](#) Annual Report - Edward Heath

The Athletics Council meets four times a year and there are four subcommittees that report to the council. USU athletes are first in the mountain west conference on graduation rates. COVID has shortened the season for most athletes. Usually by this time we have the actuals and variance. The October 28 meeting will provide those numbers.

Motion to move the Athletics Council Annual Report to the Faculty Senate Agenda made by Denise Stewardson. Seconded by John Ferguson. Moved to the agenda.

[Libraries Advisory Council](#) Annual Report - Christine Cooper Rompato

Meet once a semester to discuss the ongoing initiatives of the budget for the library. Talked about the library moving to online instruction. The hands-on courses cannot happen but e-journals are available. Reduced the number of seating in the library. They have noticed an overall drop in the student's utilizing the library. Because of COVID 19 the library was able to negotiate contracts for lower rates. Disability

access is an ongoing issue for the library. Currently working to improve the access. Journal subscriptions are being renewed. Survey results - USU faculty report using google scholar for their scholarly pursuits. It is very important for the library to support the graduate students and Digital Commons is very important to them as well.

Motion to move the Libraries Advisory Council Annual Report made by John Ferguson. Seconded by Nick Roberts. Moved to the agenda.

Old Business

N/A

New Business

Faculty Forum Discussions - Timothy Taylor

What do we do for a Faculty Forum during COVID 19? Open for suggestions. Set up a date/time for departments and utilize a Zoom meeting. Last year we did college level forums. Total participation was 75-80 faculty members. The broader concern is that the model is outdated and the notion of just having one day is not effective. There isn't great attendance or follow up and faculty feels that it is not effective in moving faculty issues forward. The suggestion was made to have faculty concerns come forward any time during the year and have faculty members articulate their issue(s). It was recommended to scrap it from faculty code and replace it with something that is better reflective of a substantive discussion. The senate needs to look at different ways to solicit information from the faculty and then be able to evaluate its effectiveness. Online forums might be a good way to move forward. Create a forum system that is moderated and issues can be submitted either anonymous or not. Those who want to be anonymous could contact the Faculty Senate President or a moderator. Names and other information could be redacted. Maintain the forum but using the suggestion box comments that have come from the faculty. Pull together a proposed agenda that will cover the issues that have been brought up by faculty. Possibly use CANVAS for any/all ongoing discussion threads. This would allow faculty to connect and move items forward. Possibly have these discussions monthly and have them come forward to faculty senate to make sure that the issues and concerns are dealt with in a timely manner. Send out a survey where faculty members could bring forth items.

Motion to move New Business to the Faculty Senate agenda made by Yoon Lee. Seconded by John Ferguson. Moved to agenda.

Adjourn: 4:40 pm